

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

House Meets At...	Votes Predicted At...
10:00 a.m. For Legislative Business Fifteen "One-minutes" Per Side	Last Vote: :Evening

Any anticipated Member absences for votes this week should be reported to the Office of the Majority Whip at 226-3210.

Floor Schedule and Procedure

- **Suspension Bills:** Today, the House will consider several bills on the Suspension calendar. Bills considered on the Suspension calendar are debatable for 40 minutes; may not be amended; and require a two-thirds vote for passage. If a recorded vote is requested, it will be postponed.

1) **H.R. ____** - To amend Public Law 110-196 to provide for a temporary extension of programs authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 beyond April 18, 2008. (Rep. Peterson – Agriculture)
- **H. Res. 1107–Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 5715 - Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008 (Rep. Castor-Rules):** The structured rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Education and Labor. The rule provides that the amendment printed in Part A of the Rules Committee report accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Debate on the rule will be managed by Rep. Castor, and consideration will proceed as follows:
 - One hour of debate on the rule.
 - Possible vote on a Democratic Motion ordering the previous question. **Democrats are urged to vote yes.**
 - Vote on adoption of the rule. **Democrats are urged to vote yes.**
- **H. Res.1103-Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2634 - Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007 (Rep. Welch-Rules):** The structured rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Debate

on the rule will be managed by Rep. Welch, and consideration will proceed as follows:

- One hour of debate on the rule.
- Possible vote on a Democratic Motion ordering the previous question. **Democrats are urged to vote yes.**
- Vote on adoption of the rule. **Democrats are urged to vote yes.**

- **H.R. 2634 - Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007 (Rep. Waters-Financial Services):** Pursuant to the rule, debate on the bill will be managed by Financial Services Committee Chair Rep. Barney Frank, or his designee, and will proceed as follows:
 - One hour of debate on the bill.
 - Debate and votes on amendments to the bill.
 - Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
 - Vote on passage of the bill.
- **H.R. 2537 – Beach Protection Act of 2007 (Rep. Pallone – Transportation and Infrastructure):** Pursuant to the rule, debate on the bill will be managed by Transportation and Infrastructure Chair Rep. James Oberstar, or his designee, and will proceed as follows:
 - Debate and votes on amendments to the bill.
 - Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
 - Vote on passage of the bill.
- **H.R. 5715 - Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008 (Rep. Miller-Education and Labor):** Pursuant to the rule, debate on the bill will be managed by Education and Labor Committee Chair Rep. George Miller, or his designee, and will proceed as follows:
 - One hour of debate on the bill.
 - Debate and votes on amendments to the bill.
 - Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
 - Vote on passage of the bill.
- **Postponed Suspension Votes:**
 - 1) **H.Res. 1097** - Expressing support for the designation of the month of April 2008, as National Child Abuse Prevention Month to provide attention to the tragic circumstances that face some of our Nation's children on a daily basis and to underscore our commitment to preventing child abuse and neglect so that all children can live in safety and security (Rep. Courtney – Education and Labor)

Bill Summary and Key Issues

H.R. 2634-The Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2008

HR 2634, the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2008, builds on the immensely successful debt relief efforts begun more than a decade ago to provide debt relief for the world's poorest countries as an essential component in the overall effort to help alleviate the poverty and misery that exists in many parts of the world.

The legislation instructs the Secretary of Treasury to commence multilateral negotiations for an agreement within the international financial institutions (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) and the Paris Club of bilateral creditors to cancel the debt of up to 24 of the world's poorest countries that can only receive aid from the International Development Association arm of the World Bank, based on relative poverty and lack of creditworthiness.

To be eligible for debt relief under this Act, these additional low-income nations, which do not qualify under current debt relief programs, must meet specific conditions outlined in the bill. These conditions include a require that governments foster transparent and participatory policies to achieve poverty reduction through economic growth; ensure sound budget procedures, good governance and effective anticorruption measures; and produce and disclose to the public an annual report disclosing how the savings from debt cancellation were used. To benefit, countries would also have to engage interested parties, including a broad cross-section of civil society groups, in the spending allocation process, produce an annual report on this spending, and make it publicly available.

Countries would be excluded from receiving the debt cancellation under the Jubilee Act if they:

- have an excessive level of military expenditures;
- have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism;
- fail to cooperate on international narcotics control matters; or
- engage in a consistent pattern of gross human rights violations

H.R. 2634 would bring debt relief within the reach of virtually all of the world's poorest countries. While the IDA-only criterion for eligibility under the bill will capture some countries with relatively low levels of external debt, all of these countries are ones with very high levels of poverty, and thus they need to maximize the amount of resources that they can marshal to promote human development and move toward the millennium development goals for reducing poverty.

The legislation also requires the Secretary to promote within the international community transparent lending processes and responsible financing policies for the benefit of debtor nation.

This legislation only provides authorization for the Secretary of the Treasury to commence efforts to negotiate a multilateral agreement on debt cancellation, but it does not authorize the implementation of any agreement. Since Congress would have to approve any future agreement that might be reached to cancel bilateral and multilateral debts, CBO estimates that enacting HR 2634, by itself, would have no budgetary impact.

The legislation also expresses the Sense of the Congress that to further the goals of debt reduction for low-income countries, in addition to the efforts

described in this Act, the United States should pay off outstanding arrearages of \$595.8 million to the multilateral development banks and debt reduction efforts.

Anticipated Amendments to H.R. 2634

1. Frank (MA)/Bachus (AL)/Biggert (AL): The amendment makes various technical corrections within the bill's "Findings" section, and adds under the eligibility criteria the requirement that a country must also be complying with minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking; cooperating with American efforts to stop illegal immigration to the United States; and be committed to free and fair elections. (10 minutes)

2. Rohrabacher (CA): The amendment adds a provision to Section 1626, defining an "eligible low-income country" to include that the government shall have been chosen by, and permits, free elections. (10 minutes)

3. Hastings (FL): The amendment adds a Sense of the Congress that, due to the current humanitarian and political instability in Haiti, including food shortages and political turmoil, the Secretary of the Treasury should use his influence to expedite the complete and immediate cancellation of Haiti's debts to all international financial institutions, or if such debt cancellation cannot be provided, to urge the institutions to immediately suspend the requirement that Haiti make further debt service payments on debts owed to the institutions. (10 minutes)

4. Weiner (NY): The amendment modifies the qualification for "eligible low-income country" to include those countries that are eligible for both International Development Association loans and World Bank loans. (10 minutes)

H.R. 5715 - THE ENSURING CONTINUED ACCESS TO STUDENT LOANS ACT OF 2008*(Rep. George Miller (CA) – Education and Labor)*

In recent months, turmoil in the U.S. credit markets has made it difficult for some lenders in the federally guaranteed student loan program to secure the capital needed to finance college loans, leading some lenders to scale back their lending activity. While no student or college has reported any problems accessing federal student aid to date, it is only prudent for the federal government to make sure that contingency plans are in place that would provide students and families with continued, uninterrupted access to federal loans, regardless of what's happening in the credit markets. The Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008 would provide new protections, in addition to those in current law, to ensure that families can continue to access the loans they need to pay for college.

H.R. 5715 would:

Reduce borrowers' reliance on costlier private college loans and encourage responsible borrowing

- Under current law, dependent undergraduate students can borrow \$3,500 in unsubsidized federal loans during their first year of college; \$4,500 in unsubsidized loans during their second year; and \$5,500 in unsubsidized loans during their final two years of college. Over the course of their education, dependent undergraduate students can currently borrow up to \$23,000 in total federal student loans (both subsidized and unsubsidized) and independent undergraduates can borrow up to \$46,000 in total loans.

- H.R. 5715 would increase the annual loan limits on federal unsubsidized student loans by \$2,000 for all students, and increase the aggregate loan limits (the total loan limit over the course of a student's education) to \$31,000 for dependent undergraduates and to \$57,500 for independent undergraduates.

Give parent borrowers more time to begin paying off their federal PLUS college loans

- Under current law, parent borrowers must begin repayment of federal PLUS college loans 60 days after the disbursement of the loan.
- H.R. 5715 would give parents the option to defer repayment until up to six months after their children leave school, giving families more flexibility in hard economic times.

Help struggling homeowners pay for college

- Under current law, parents with an adverse credit history are ineligible to receive a parent PLUS loan, except under extenuating circumstances.
- H.R. 5715 would temporarily classify as an extenuating circumstance delinquencies on home mortgages of up to 180 days, therefore making it possible for parents feeling strained by the current housing market to secure loans for their children.

Provide the U.S. Secretary of Education additional tools to safeguard access to student loans

- H.R. 5715 would clarify that existing law gives the U.S. Education Secretary the mandatory authority to advance federal funds to guaranty agencies operating as lenders of last resort in the event that they do not have sufficient capital to originate new loans. The bill would also allow guaranty agencies to carry out the functions of lender of last resort on a school-wide basis.
- H.R. 5715 would also give the Secretary the temporary authority to purchase loans from lenders in the federal guaranteed loan program, if there was a determination that lenders and other existing policy options were unable to meet the demand for loans. This would ensure that lenders continue to have access to capital to originate new loans. The Education Department would only be authorized to purchase loans in such a manner that would carry no cost for the federal government.

Anticipated Amendments to H.R. 5715:

1. Miller, George (CA): The Manager's amendment makes technical and conforming changes; states that loan limit increases available under this Act are available only to students meeting the requirements of section 484(a) of the HEA; targets the loan limit increases to those students and families in most need; in regard to school-wide lender-of-last-resort eligibility, specifies that the Secretary of Education shall determine whether a school qualifies and provides criteria for

the Secretary to consider in making the determination; specifies that funds received by lenders from loan sales be used to originate new loans; clarifies that the Secretary has the authority to enter into forward commitments to purchase new loans; and clarifies that, at the discretion of the Secretary, a loan purchased by the Secretary may continue to be serviced by the current lender. (10 minutes)

2. Petri (WI): The amendment requires the Secretary of Education to review and revise as necessary the regulations concerning prohibited guaranty agency inducements to eligible lenders. (10 minutes)

3. Castle (DE)/Welch (VT): The amendment requires the General Accountability Office to conduct a study of the impact of raising loan limits on (1) tuition, fees, and room and board at institutions of higher education; and (2) private loan borrowing for attendance at institutions of higher education. (10 minutes)

4. Castor (FL): The amendment temporarily classifies medical bill payment delinquencies of up to 180 days an extenuating circumstance which shall not interfere with parents' ability to receive PLUS loans for their children's tuition. (10 minutes)

H.R. 2537 - BEACH PROTECTION ACT OF 2007 (*Rep. Pallone – Transportation and Infrastructure*)

H.R. 2537, the Beach Protection Act of 2008, amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (commonly known as the Clean Water Act) to reauthorize appropriations for the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health ("BEACH") Act through fiscal year 2012. As reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, H.R. 2537 reauthorizes \$40 million in appropriations annually for the Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") BEACH program. The BEACH program provides grants to states along the coasts and Great Lakes for state and local recreational water monitoring and notification programs.

The Beach Protection Act increases the existing annual authorization by \$10 million to reflect an expansion of eligible uses for grants under this program. For example, H.R. 2537 allows states to utilize a portion of their BEACH grant funding to develop and implement coastal recreation waters pollution source identification and tracking programs, which will enable interested states to locate the likely sources of coastal water contamination.

H.R. 2537 also clarifies and enhances state and local authorities for notifying the public when the beach waters are likely contaminated and present a potential threat to human health. First, this legislation clarifies that the public must be notified with 24-hours of the results of contaminated water quality sample. However, because many states utilize a system where two contaminated samples must be identified before a beach is closed, H.R. 2537 also requires that a physical sign must be posted at any beach where the results of a water quality sample demonstrate the *likelihood* that the water *may be contaminated*. This information is essential to ensure the public can avoid contact with potentially harmful pollutants while visiting their favorite beach.

The Beach Protection Act also enhances EPA's review of individual states' compliance with the requirements of the BEACH Act by requiring the Administrator to conduct an annual review of implementation of the BEACH Act by State and local governments, and to take corrective action for State and local

governments that are not in compliance with the BEACH Act requirements. This legislation also requires the Government Accountability Office to review and report on EPA's administration of the BEACH Act.

Finally, H.R. 2537 requires EPA to carry out a study of the formula for the distribution of coastal recreation water quality monitoring and notification program development and implementation grants under the BEACH Act and to report to Congress on the results of the study, including any recommendations for revision of the existing formula.

The Chairwoman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, Eddie Bernice Johnson, will offer a manager's amendment to H.R. 2537 that will direct EPA to complete its ongoing evaluation and validation of a "rapid testing methodology" for detecting contamination of coastal recreation waters by October 1, 2010, and upon completion of the validation, to develop guidelines for their use at beaches most frequently utilized by the public. Rapid testing methodologies are intended to shorten the period between when coastal recreation water is sampled to when results are made publicly available, with the goal of having real-time, same-day information on the condition of the nation's beaches and recreational waters. Upon completion of EPA's validation of a rapid testing methodology, the period of time necessary for testing coastal waters is likely to shorten from 24 hours to between 2 and 3 hours.

Quote of the Day

"The liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it comes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in its essence, is fascism - ownership of government by an individual, by a group," -Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Office of the House Majority Whip | H-329 The Capitol |
Washington, DC 20515 | p. (202)226-3210 | f. (202)226-1115